

Annie the Acheropite

The mystery figure overlooking Spring Mountain Ranch

LAS VEGAS -- Just outside of Las Vegas within the Red Rock National Conservation Area sits a natural phenomenon staff and volunteers of Spring Mountain Ranch State Park have been investigating for some time.

Sitting on Black Velvet peak, overlooking the park, is an image that some say resembles the Virgin Mary. But little is known about the figure that watches over the park.

There are many stories associated with the image. One of the stories relates back to the early history of Spring Mountain Ranch State Park.

In 1865, Jim Wilson and George Anderson homesteaded the 360 acres that is now Spring Mountain Ranch State Park and created what later became known as the Sandstone Ranch. The Sandstone Ranch grew fruit and vegetables and raised cattle for sale to the mining camps in the area and the growing community called Las Vegas.

George Anderson met a Paiute woman by the name of Kayer, but many Paiute women were called "Annie" in those days.

Annie had one son named James, or "Jim Jr.," with her previous husband Jim Beck (or Betts). George and Annie Anderson then had George Twison Anderson Wilson, aka "Tweed." Little information exists on what happened to Annie or where she went. There are records that Tweed remembers his mom's death when he was young.

Some people believe the Black Velvet peak image is of Annie. They believe Annie protects and watches over Spring Mountain Ranch State Park because of the direction her face is directed.

Phenomena of this type were originally called *acheropites*. The word *acheropite* comes from the Greek meaning "not created by human hands."

Since the phenomena was probably created by a large rock falling off of the cliff, which created the color difference seen today, it can also be considered as an acheropite, or simulacra, due to the spiritual nature of the natural phenomena.

View the image of "Annie" here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nevadadcnr/6211818761/in/photostream>

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